

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of mounting a vial in a level providing impact resistance and for increased visibility of the vial, the method comprising:
 - providing the level with a body having a front sidewall, a rear sidewall, a recess extending through the body from the front sidewall to the rear sidewall, and a measuring surface abutting both sidewalls;
 - positioning the vial in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
 - enclosing the vial within the recess with a ring member, the ring member comprising front and rear portions with the vial positioned therebetween, the portions being circular and having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface, the front portion and extending outward from the body the front sidewall and the rear portion extending outward from the rear sidewall.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the ring member is a first ring member with first front and rear portions, the method further comprising enclosing the first ring member with a second ring member having front and rear portions, the second portions having a funnel-shaped surface aligned with the funnel-shaped surface of the first portions.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the second portions include wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the method further comprising securing the second ring member to the level by passing fasteners through the apertures and the openings.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the first and second ring members have contrasting colors to outline the vial.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the second ring member is a soft elastomeric providing impact-absorption to the level.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the first and second ring members are bonded together before the vial is enclosed in the recess.

7. (Currently Amended) A level having a vial secured thereto, the level comprising:

- a body having a front sidewall, a rear sidewall, a measuring surface abutting both sidewalls, and a recess extending through the body from the front sidewall to the rear sidewall;
- a vial positioned in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
- a ring member enclosing the vial within the recess, the ring member comprising front and rear portions with the vial positioned therebetween, the front and rear portions being circular and each portion having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface, the front portion extending outward from the front sidewall and the rear portion extending outward from the rear sidewall.

8. (Previously Presented) The level of claim 7 wherein the ring member is a first ring member with first front and rear portions, the level further comprising a second ring member enclosing the first ring member, the second ring member having front and rear portions, the second portions having a funnel-shaped surface aligned with the funnel-shaped surface of the first portions.

9. (Previously Presented) The level of claim 8 wherein the second portions include wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the apertures and openings receiving fasteners to secure the second ring member to the level.

10. (Previously Presented) The level of claim 8 wherein the first and second ring members have contrasting colors to outline the vial.

11. (Previously Presented) The level of claim 8 wherein the second ring member is a soft elastomeric providing impact-absorption to the level.

12. (Previously Presented) The level of claim 8 wherein the first and second ring members are bonded together.

13. (Currently Amended) A level having a vial secured thereto, the level comprising:

- a body having a measuring surface and a recess extending through the body from a front sidewall to a rear sidewall;
- a vial positioned in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface, the vial including a central portion where a bubble rests when the measuring surface is at a desired orientation; and
- a ring member enclosing the vial within the recess, the ring member engaging the vial and the front and rear sidewalls body, the ring member being circular and having a beveled edge forming a funnel-shaped surface, each point along the edge defining a slope line, each of the slope lines intersecting the central portion vial,

whereby the vial is protected by the body level and ring member while visibility of the vial is enhanced.

14. Cancelled

15. (Original) The level of claim 13 wherein the ring member includes wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the apertures and openings receiving fasteners to secure the ring member to the level.

16. (Original) The level of claim 13 wherein the ring member includes inner and outer layers, the inner and outer layers having contrasting colors to outline the vial.

17. (Original) The level of claim 16 wherein the inner and outer layers are elastomeric and provide impact-absorption to the level.

18. (Original) The level of claim 17 wherein the inner layer is acrylonitrile butadiene styrene and the outer layer is thermoplastic rubber.

19. (Original) The level of claim 17 wherein the outer layer has a lower density than the inner layer.

20. (Currently Amended) A level comprising:

- a body having a measuring surface and a recess extending through the body from a front sidewall to a rear sidewall;
- a vial positioned in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
- a ring member enclosing the vial within the recess, the ring member comprising a first ring member having first front and rear portions ~~front and rear portions~~ with the vial positioned therebetween, the first portions being circular and having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface, and a second ring member having second front and rear portions, the second portions being circular and having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface aligned with and abutting the funnel-shaped surface of the first portions, the front portions being positioned adjacent to the front sidewall and the rear portions being positioned adjacent to the rear sidewall.